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Breaking the copy/paste cycle: the Stretchable Selection Tool

[Apperley, M.](#) [Fletcher, D.](#) [Rogers, B.](#)

Dept. of Comput. Sci., Waikato Univ., Hamilton , New Zealand;

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Abstract

Copy-and-paste, or cut-and-paste, using a clipboard or paste buffer, has long been the principle facility provided to users for transferring data between and within GUI applications. We argue that this mechanism can be clumsy in circumstances where several pieces of information must be moved systematically—for example, extracting a predetermined set of data fields from a piece of unstructured text. In dealing with the plethora of potentially useful, but not appropriately structured, information on the World Wide Web, interfaces which facilitate manual information gathering are of considerable importance. We present an alternative, more natural user interface facility to make the task less onerous, and to provide improved visual feedback during the operation. We call our facility the “Stretchable Selection Tool”, a semi-transparent overlay augmenting the mouse pointer to automate paste operations and provide information to prompt the user. We describe a prototype implementation that functions in a collaborative software environment, allowing users to cooperate on multiple copy/paste operations.

Index Terms

Inspec

Controlled Indexing

[graphical user interfaces](#) [groupware](#) [information resources](#) [mouse controllers \(computers\)](#)
[utility programs](#)

Non-controlled Indexing

[GUI applications](#) [Stretchable Selection Tool](#) [World Wide Web](#) [augmented mouse pointer](#)
[clipboard](#) [collaborative software environment](#) [copy-and-paste](#) [cut-and-paste](#) [data fields](#)
[data transfer](#) [manual information gathering](#) [multiple copy/paste operations](#) [paste buffer](#)
[paste operations automation](#) [prototype implementation](#) [semi-transparent overlay](#)
[systematic information movement](#) [unstructured text](#) [user interface facility](#) [user prompting](#)
[visual feedback](#)

Author Keywords

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References

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